

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1011

December 3rd, 2025

Dr. Beth Schiavino-Narvaez
Director of the Department of Defense Education Activity
Department of Defense
4800 Mark Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22350

Dear Dr. Narvaez,

I write with concern regarding the Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA)'s purported decision to eliminate all special education and speech language assessors and education technologist positions at all DODEA schools, in particular, special education assessors who are vital in providing critical evaluations and support for students with learning differences and ensuring tailored instruction in speech, math, and reading.¹ A recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report notes that 15% of all DODEA students receive special education services, and 26% of those receiving special education experience speech impairments.²

I am specifically worried by the potential consequences of this decision on not only DODEA students who receive special education services, but also special education teachers and support services staff who could bear additional duties when staffing for special education is already short. Accordingly, the same GAO report finds that special education staffing shortages, coupled with the resulting heavy workloads, contribute to the difficulty DODEA schools face in educating students with disabilities. This impact is stressed by special education staff in four schools that GAO visited who were unable to meet the service minutes required in students' individualized education plans (IEPs).³ The prospect of further reductions in special education staff, and its consequences for students with disabilities, is troubling.

The children of service members deserve access to high quality special education services. I respectfully request that you respond to the following questions by December 17th, 2025.

1. Please provide a thorough explanation of the steps and rationale, including potential impacts, that led to the DODEA-wide elimination of special education and speech language assessors.
 - a. Is this change in effect for the 2025-2026 school year? If not, when will it be enacted?

¹ <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2025/06/18/dod-schools-reorganize-to-target-more-support-to-military-children/>

² https://files.gao.gov/reports/GAO-25-107053/index.html?_gl=1*smszkt*_ga*Mjg4NDk4OTE3LjE3NTgwNDU5ODk.*_ga_V393SNS3SR*cze3NTk1MDM0MjkkbzUkZzEkdDE3NTk1MDM0NTAkajM5JGwwJGgw

³ Ibid.

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- b. Did this determination occur in accordance with Secretary Hegseth's "Initiating the Workforce Acceleration & Recapitalization Initiative", which states, "the net effect will be a reduction in the number of civilian full-time equivalent positions"?
2. Will, and if so how, will the duties and responsibilities of special education and speech language assessors be reassigned or covered by other special education and related services staff?
 - a. Please describe any effects on DODEA's ability to implement GAO's recommendation to revise special education staffing formulas to incorporate students' service minute requirements specified in IEPs from its April 2025 report.
3. Please describe any additional burden placed on those responsible for creating an IEP.
 - a. Are IEP development meetings continuing to be scheduled within 10 school days from the eligibility meeting?
 - b. Has there been any delays in implementing an IEP following the IEP development meeting? If so, what steps is DODEA taking to minimize any delays in implementation?
4. How does the elimination of these positions affect evaluations of students for special education eligibility determinations? Are eligibility determination meetings continuing to take place no later than 10 school days after the student has been assessed by the school?
 - a. Are students being evaluated along the same timeline and manner as before this elimination?

Our military children also make tremendous sacrifices to the United States; we owe them our Nation's support. I look forward to your response and DODEA's continued efforts to improve the education of our military children.

Sincerely,



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator